

Savior or Lord?

Of the plethora of troubling problems facing “modern” Christianity, there is one that seems to resonant a bass line that at least a few others seem to follow in rhythmic cadence: **Everyone wants a Savior- few want a Lord.**

A **Savior** is both *what* people want, and therefore, *how* they choose to see and “believe in” Him. This is somewhat understandable, since we:

- Need *saving*, Romans 3:9,23;
- Certainly want to be *saved* or *justified*, Romans 3:24a;
- Surely like the notion of being “*a gift by His grace,*” Romans 3:24b;
- Also find it especially appealing if the above means that we don’t have to do anything to attain this *justification* except have “*faith in Jesus,*” Romans 3:26.

Everyone wants *this* kind of Savior! Who wouldn’t? I sure do! But what does it mean to have “*faith in Jesus,*” exactly? Is it just to *believe* that He was/is the Son of God who *died* for our sins, was *buried*, and then *resurrected*? Certainly, such is involved as Romans 10:9b teaches, “*and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.*” But what does the “a” (first) part of that verse say?

Actually, let’s back up and get the whole sentence, “*But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation,*” Romans 10:8-10. Did you get that? Salvation through Jesus Christ is attained by “*believing*” who and what Jesus was, but also requires that we “*confess*” **Jesus “as Lord.”** Now what does that mean, exactly?

“*Lord*” is translated from the Greek word *kurios*, and is generally translated as “*lord*” or “*master*” in the New Testament. But as with many words (in Greek and English), it carries either an *unofficial/general* designation or an *official/specific* one. Generally, it was used as a term of respect or homage, and is even translated as “*Sir,*” cf. John 12:21. However, when it is used in the official or specific sense relative to divinity, it becomes “*Lord*” or “*Master,*” cf. John 20:28. So, which of these applications do you think is intended in our passage of Romans 10:9 as a prerequisite for salvation? Simply paying general homage or respect (*i.e.* lip service), or specifically confessing Jesus’ *lordship* and *mastery* of your life? You see, simply acknowledging or even showing respect to Jesus as the Son of God isn’t all there is to *faith* or *salvation*. If that is all “*believe*” means, the demons qualify, James 2:19.

Instead, *confessing Jesus “as Lord”* is declaring your *submission* to His *control* of your mind, heart, soul, and strength- you and everything that makes you, you! Surely, this confession is based on *Who* and *What He is*, but also includes *who* and *what you are willing to become- His, totally and completely*. Such is as much a part of “*salvation*” as “*believe in you heart.*” Simply put, we may **want** a *Savior* without a *Lord*, but we can’t **have** Jesus as our *Savior* without Him being our *Lord*, cf. Romans 6:15-23.

Jesus was, even from His humble beginnings, “*a Savior, who is Christ the Lord,*” Luke 2:11. The New Testament confirms the linkage between **both** roles throughout, cf. Philippians 3:20; 2Peter 1:11; 2:20; 3:20. Thus, despite our desires, the reality is that we really can’t have *one* without the *other*. Do you *believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? If so, great! Now will you submit to Him as *Lord* of your life? If so, I’d love nothing more than to help. Jesus wants to be your *Savior*, if you’ll let Him be your *Lord* also. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)